

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ZA

SUBJECT: ZAMBIAN INTEREST IN US ARMS

REF: STATE 048692; STATE 054366; LUSAKA 0559

1. SUMMARY. CHONA RATHER THAN KAUNDA GAVE ME APPOINTMENT AT HIS HOME AT 1100 HOURS MARCH 6 AND SPENT ENSUING ONE HOUR AND A HALF EXPLAINING RECENT ZAMBIAN INTEREST IN US ARMS AND COUNTRY'S POLICY RK "CALCULATED NEUTRALITY" EVEN THOUGH ITS NEIGHBORS TO EAST AND WEST ARE BUILDING UP THEIR ARSENALS MAINLY FROM SOVIET SOURCES. CHONA GAVE IMPRESSION KAUNDA HAD HIM DELIBERATELY KNOCK ON OUR DOOR TO EST IF IT WOULD BE OPEN SHOULD ZAMBIA HAVE SUDDEN FUTURE NEED FOR SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY. WHILE NONE IMMEDIATELY REQUIRED, FUTURE NEED WOULD LARGELY DEPEND ON PATTERN OF SOVIET MOVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN 1976, MOVES WHICH CHONA SAID ZAMBIA WILL RESIST. END SUMMARY.

2. CHONA SAID KAUNDA WAS REASSURED AND GRATEFUL FOR PROMPT AND FAVORABLE US RESPONSE AND WOULD HAVE SO INFORMED ME PERSONALLY HAD HIS WEEKEND SCHEDULE BEEN FREER. PRESIDENT HOWEVER HAD BEEN UNABLE TO BREAK OR SHIFT APPOINTMENTS ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. AS IT WAS, CHONAR AID, HE AND PRESIDENT HAD DONE CONSIDERABLE HOMWORK IN SHORT TIME IN PREPARATION FOR CHONA'S MEETING WITH ME THIS MORNING.

3. CHONA SAID HE INSTRUCTED TO SAY THAT ZAMBIA CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN THOROUGH-GOING ANALYSIS OF THREAT TO ITS SECURITY AS RESULT OF
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RAPIDLY CHANGING POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. KAUNDA

HOPES USG ALSO MAKING ITS OWN INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT SO THAT HE CAN COUNT ON COMPARING NOTES ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE WHEN SECRETARY VISITS ZAMBIA IN NEAR FUTURE.

4. CONTINUING, CHONA SAID ZAMBIANS ARE RELUCTANT TO RUSH ALONG WITH ANGOLA, TANZANIA, AND MOZAMBIQUE INTO ACQUISITION OF SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY FOR NUMBER OF REASONS. CENTRAL FEAR IS DANGER OF PROVOKING ("TEMPTING," CHONA SAID) SOVIETS (PRESUMABLY CHONA MEANT TO STEP UP THEIR INTERFERENCE IN ZAMBIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS). ALSO, THERE IS CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE INTERNAL REACTION WHICH COULD BE PROVOCATIVE FOR AN AROUSED ZAMBIAN CITIZENRY WANTING TO JOIN WITH OTHER BLACK AFRICANS TO MAKE WAR ON SOUTH AFRICA. KAUNDA CHARACTERISTICALLY FEELS ESSENTIAL TASK AT HAND IN FACE OF POTENTIAL SOVIET THREAT IS TO BUILD UP AND MAINTAIN ZAMBIA'S MORAL STRENGTH WHICH HE CONSIDERS BEST AVAILABLE ARMAMENT AGAINST SOVIETS. SEVERAL TIMES CHONA REPEATED THAT "WE WILL RESIST SOVIETS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA."

5. CHONA SAID KAUNDA WANTED USG TO KNOW THAT HIS PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS LEADS HIM TO CONCLUDE THAT ZAMBIA WILL CERTAINLY NEED US MILITARY ASSISTANCE, THE TIMING TO DEPEND ON RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT AND THEN COORDINATED STUDIES OF THE SOVIET THREAT AS IT EVOLVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA DURING CURRENT YEAR.

6. IN REPLY, I SAID MY INSTRUCTIONS OF FEBRUARY 28 AND MARCH 5 TO EXPLORE WITH KAUNDA POSSIBLE NEED FOR US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZAMBIA WITHOUT A FORMAL REQUEST FOR SAME SHOULD OF ITSELF BE SUFFICIENT ANSWER AND ASSURANCE. CHONA AGREED. SAID THIS WAS PRECISELY WHAT KAUNDA NEEDED TO STAND UP MORE FIRMLY TO SOVIETS IN HIS POLICY OF "CALCULATED NEUTRALITY," ESPECIALLY AS KAUNDA IS OPPOSED TO AN ARMS RACE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

7. CHONA SAID US READINESS TO PROVIDE ARMS WAS IMPORTANT AS ZAMBIANS WOULD NOT WANT TO FUMBLE OR DELAY IN MAKING REQUEST WHEN AND IF CRUNCH COMES. KAUNDA PERSONALLY CONVINCED SOVIETS WISH TO CREATE MILITARY BELT FROM INDIAN TO ATLANTIC OCEANS ACROSS TANZANIA, MOZAMBIQUE, MALAWI, ZAMBIA, ZAIRE, AND ANGOLA TO SUBSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC BELT IN REGION WHICH KAUNDA SUGGESTED IN TANZANIA LAST YEAR AT SABA SABA CELEBRATIONS. HOWEVER, ZAMBIA FEELS BEST POLICY FOR MOMENT IS TO FOLLOW SITUATION CLOSELY

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TO SEE IF SOVIET ACTIONS CONFIRM ZAMBIAN SUSPICIONS.

8. COMMENT: FROM THIS CONVERSATION IT APPEARS THAT POLITICAL AS MUCH AS TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS UNDERLY ZAMBIAN INABILITY AT THIS TIME TO SPECIFY WHAT AND IF US MILITARY AID IS WANTED. CHONA SEEMED BE FEELING AROUND TO FIND OUT WHO MIGHT BE ZAMBIA'S FRIENDS OF LAST RESORT AND SOURCES FROM WHICH MILITARY AID MAY BE FORTHCOMING ON SHORT NOTICE IF SITUATION ALONG ITS BORDERS

SEEN TO DETERIORATE. WHILE THE ZAMBIANS SEEM TO HAVE
NO THOUGHTS NOW ABOUT SPECIFIC ITEMS REQUIRED, THEY MAY WELL
PRODUCE SHOPPING LIST AT TIME OF SECRETARY'S VISIT IF NOT
BEFORE. MEANTIME, KAUNDA IS IN POSITION USE OUR EXPRESSION OF
SYMPATHETIC INTEREST IN ZAMBIAN ARMS NEEDS TO REASSURE THOSE
AMONG HIS MILITARY WHO MAY BE CONCERNED THAT ZAMBIA IS NOT YET
DOING ENOUGH TO MEET HER URGENT DEFENSE NEEDS. WE UNDERSTAND
FROM CHONA THAT ZAMBIANS MAY ALSO IN MEANTIME BE TALKING WITH
KENYANS AND ZAIROIS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH US MILITARY
AID PROGRAMS.
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